

INTRODUCTION

This volume of the Urban Forest Manual (UFM) is a technical guide created to facilitate the planning, design, installation and maintenance of landscaping that is required for new development and redevelopment per the City of Tacoma's (City) Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) 13.06.090B Landscaping and Buffering Standards. It is intended to be used concurrently with TMC 13.06.090B to ensure the requirements and standards are executed properly. Before finalizing development plans, contact Planning and Development Services (PDS) at (253) 591-5030, or visit them at 747 Market Street on the third floor, to verify that all other applicable City codes and manuals have been met. This manual can also be used as a guide for the planning, design, installation and maintenance for any landscaping project.

INTENT

The City's landscaping requirements are intended to contribute to the aesthetic environment of the city, enhance livability and foster economic development. Effective landscaping can provide for an attractive urban setting; support the urban citywide tree canopy and wildlife, such as birds; buffer visual impacts of development; help reduce stormwater runoff; and contribute to the planting, maintenance, and preservation of a stable and sustainable urban forest.

TMC 13.06.090B helps to support this intent by requiring landscaping (trees, shrubs and groundcover) be installed when significant development activities take place. In crafting TMC 13.06.090B, the City sought to achieve these objectives in a flexible manner that does not overly burden development activities. Landscaping requirements generally apply to new construction and substantial alterations of structures, parking areas, streets and sidewalks. Minor alterations, and one, two and three-family development are exempt from landscaping requirements, except for street tree requirements triggered by off-site improvements as specified in Section 4.2.3 Street Trees. The code also contains a range of options intended to provide flexibility while still meeting the intent, as well as incentives for inclusion of desired features like larger tree species, native plants, and Low Impact Development stormwater facilities.

When required, landscaping must comply with the code standards for plant selection, installation and maintenance. These code standards are intended to better ensure that plants survive and thrive, to minimize conflicts with infrastructure, and in some cases to provide a substantial visual buffer. Generally, landscaping plans, and management plans detailing how landscaping will be maintained, must be prepared by a professional. TMC 13.06.090B also references the UFM as a source of additional guidance on the technical aspects of landscaping. However, please note that the TMC 13.06.090B is the source of regulatory authority and is the final say on landscaping requirements.

In certain instances other City codes may require or pertain to landscaping. For additional landscaping requirements, erosion control and other stormwater related measures refer to the City's Stormwater Management Manual available online at cityoftacoma.org/stormwatermanual. For street tree planting and pruning not associated with development activities, refer to TMC Title 9.

DETERMINING LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS

The UFM is organized to guide users in determining if and how landscaping is required in association with development activities. The following steps are recommended:

1. Determine if your development will trigger landscaping requirements, and which ones apply.

***Chapter 1** of the UFM provides an overview of the City's landscaping requirements and an indication of when they typically apply. It is intended to be used in conjunction with TMC 13.06.090B .*

2. If landscaping is required, determine how much and what type is required.

***Chapter 2** of the UFM includes a landscaping requirements table, for use in determining how much landscaping will be required, based on the location, scope and type of development activities.*

*In addition, UFM **Chapter 3** provides guidance on determining whether landscaping features eligible for incentives or bonuses under the landscaping code may reduce the amount of required landscaping or provide flexibility on planting location.*

3. Determine requirements intended to ensure that landscaping survives and thrives.

***Chapter 4** of the UFM provides guidance on planting and installation.*

4. Based on the landscaping that is required and how it should be selected and cared for, prepare your application for submittal with your building or site development permit. To enable staff to determine that your proposed landscaping meets the code, the following items are required for submittal:

- *Landscaping Requirements Table – (discussed in **Chapter 2** and provided as 0)*
- *Landscape Plan – (refer to **Chapter 5** and 0)*
- *Landscape Management Plan – (refer to **Chapter 6** and 0)*
- *Tree Protection Plan and Arborist Report (if retaining vegetation) – (refer to **Chapter 7** and 0)*

5. After submittal, City staff will guide you through the review and approval process.

Once construction permits are issued, landscaping is required to be installed (or bonded for) in accordance with the approved plans and pertinent code requirements. Ongoing maintenance and replacement of required landscaping is the responsibility of the property owner.